

SP-R5 Assess Recreation Areas Management*October 25, 2002***1.0 Introduction/Background**

During the scoping and issues identification phase of this project's relicensing effort, issues have been raised regarding the role that agencies with management responsibility (the California Departments of Parks and Recreation (DPR), Water Resources (DWR), and Boating and Waterways (DBW), the City of Oroville, Feather River Recreation and Parks District (FRPRD), and Butte County) can play to enhance recreational opportunities within the Study Area. This study will assess the Study Area's recreation area management. The role of fish and wildlife management is addressed in SP-R4—Assess Relationship of Fish and Wildlife Management and Recreation.

Sub-committee reports and minutes produced by the Oroville Recreation Advisory Council Committee (ORAC), information from County Supervisor Beeler's office, and a study by Kearns and West and CPS and community comments and responses will also be reviewed and used to guide implementation of this study (Attachment A).

2.0 Study Objective

The main objective of this study is to identify the effectiveness of recreation area management on providing recreational opportunities within the Study Area. This study will assess the current range of recreation area management actions being undertaken, and will identify the responsible agencies. It will then identify the recreation area management actions needed to maintain, preserve, or enhance recreational opportunities.

3.0 Relationship to Relicensing /Need for the Study

This study is needed to meet the relicensing requirements of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Specifically, FERC requires "a statement of the existing measures...to be continued or maintained...for the purposes of creating, preserving, or enhancing recreational opportunities at the project and in its vicinity" (Chapter 1, Subpart F, Section 4.51 of 18 CFR). Additionally FERC requires that licensees cooperate with local, state, and federal agencies regarding lands adjacent to the Study Area (Part 2, Subchapter A, Chapter 1 of 18 CFR).

The purpose and need for the study is to address Issue Statement R4—adequacy of operations and maintenance and clean-up activities associated with existing and new recreation areas; and Issue Statement R5—appropriate recreation funding, development, and management structure. For R4 the specific Issues that will be addressed include RE 87 and 88. For R5 the specific Issues that will be addressed include RE 3, 4, 5-10, 12, 13-15, 28-39, 53, 55, 56, 60, 61, 63-83, 85, 96, and 104.

4.0 Study Area

The Study Area includes Lake Oroville, the lands and waters within and adjacent to (1/4 mile) the FERC project boundary, and adjacent lands, facilities, and areas with a clear project nexus. The following developed recreation areas and sites are included:

Campgrounds

Bidwell Canyon Campground	Floating Campsites
Bloomer Cove Boat-In Campsite (BIC)	Lime Saddle Campground
Bloomer Knoll BIC	Lime Saddle Group Campground
Bloomer Point BIC	Loafer Creek Campground
Bloomer Group BIC	Loafer Creek Group Campground
Craig Saddle BIC	Loafer Creek Horse Campground
Foreman Creek BIC	Oroville Wildlife Area (OWA) (Larkin Road Camping Area)
Goat Ranch BIC	North Thermalito Forebay RV “en route” Campground

Day Use Areas (DUAs)

Lake Oroville Visitor Center	Saddle Dam DUA
Lime Saddle DUA	North Thermalito Forebay DUA
Bidwell Canyon DUA	South Thermalito Forebay DUA
Loafer Creek DUA	Thermalito Afterbay DUA (off Highway 162)
Oroville Dam Overlook Area	Thermalito Afterbay Wilbur Road DUA
Spillway DUA	Thermalito Afterbay Larkin Road DUA
	Burma Road and Lakeland Boulevard DUA

Boat Launches

Lime Saddle Boat Launch Area (BLA)	Foreman Creek Car-Top BLR
Loafer Creek BLA	Dark Canyon Car-Top BLR
Bidwell Canyon BLA	Stringtown Car-Top BLR
Enterprise Boat Launch Ramp (BLR)	Vinton Gulch Car-Top BLR
Nelson Bar Car-Top BLR	Thermalito Afterbay (4)
South Thermalito Forebay	North Thermalito Forebay
Diversion Pool-Burma Road and RR Grade	

Other Recreational Facilities with Project Nexus

Lime Saddle Marina	Bidwell Marina
Floating Restrooms	Aquatic Center

Brad P. Freeman Trail	Feather River Hatchery
Lake Oroville State Recreation Area	Clay Pit State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA)
(LOSRA) Hiking/Equestrian Trail	Model Aircraft Flying Area
Diversion Pool	OWA
Dispersed use areas along the upstream and downstream reaches of the Feather River	

5.0 General Approach

Task 1—Identify Effectiveness of Management’s Provision of Recreational Opportunities

Researchers will gather information about recreational opportunities currently provided within the Study Area. This will be accomplished by reviewing documents, contacting Study Area managers, and conducting site visits. Emphasis will be on recreational opportunities supported by developed facilities within the Study Area. This approach will also use input from SP-R7—Reservoir Boating Survey, SP-R9—Existing Recreation Use, and SP-R13—Recreation Surveys.

Task 2—Assess Current Management Actions and Identify Responsible Agencies

Researchers will gather information about recreation-related management actions currently occurring in the Study Area. Researchers will also identify which of the Study Area management agencies are conducting actions specific to recreation-related management. Researchers will describe basic management functions, as well as staffing and the existing budget.

Researchers will document the need for additional actions, if any, currently not pursued, to meet FERC and agency mandates. This will be accomplished by reviewing documents, contacting Study Area managers, members of ORAC, the City of Oroville, FRPRD, County Supervisor Beeler’s office, knowledgeable individuals and groups, and by conducting site visits.

Task 3—Identify Management Actions and Funding Needed to Maintain or Enhance Recreational Opportunities

This task will have several subtasks that will assess specific actions needed to maintain, preserve, or enhance recreational opportunities in the Study Area. This task will be divided into manageable subtasks as described below. The current management relationship will be assessed with private enterprise and local government agencies and its effect on recreation opportunities for example, Stringtown Mountain Resort, Lake Oroville Public Utilities District, etc. (e.g., developer of Stringtown, DPR, Supervisor Beeler, head of the Kelley Ridge Homeowners Association).

Task 3A—Identify Management Actions Needed to Maintain Recreational Opportunities

Researchers will identify management actions needed to maintain recreational opportunities by reviewing documents, interviewing Study Area managers, ORAC members, local government agencies, representatives from private businesses, and conducting site visits.

Researchers will then combine findings from the above methods with input from SP-R7, SP-R8—Carrying Capacity, SP-R9, and SP-R13.

Emphasis will be on maintaining recreational opportunities supported by developed facilities within the Study Area. Information will also be provided to identify where recreational opportunities can be preserved that do not rely on developed facilities. For example, there may be management actions that could be taken to maintain fishing or hiking opportunities along the low flow section of the Feather River.

Task 3B—Identify Management Actions Needed to Enhance Recreational Opportunities

This task will use similar methodology as Task 3A, but will focus on enhancing recreation opportunities.

Researchers will identify management actions to maintain or enhance recreational opportunities by reviewing documents, contacting Study Area managers, and conducting site visits. Researchers will then combine findings from the above methods with input from SP-R7, SP-R8, SP-R9, and SP-R13.

Emphasis during this task will be on enhancing recreational opportunities supported by developed facilities within the Study Area. For example, DFG managers have stated that portions of the OWA should no longer facilitate camping, as certain areas are more appropriate for wildlife habitat. Camping is not designated in all areas of the OWA, and when it occurs illegally, it can disturb wildlife. Facility enhancements could be made at the Larkin Road OWA site, concentrating camping impacts there and allowing wildlife more habitat elsewhere. This would potentially enhance wildlife-related habitat in the OWA, recreation facilities, wildlife viewing, and hunting for visitors. Information will also be provided to identify where recreational opportunities can be enhanced that do not rely on developed facilities, such as bird watching along the Feather River near the OWA.

Task 3C—Identify Funding Mechanisms Needed to Accomplish Tasks 3A and 3B

The primary responsibility for funding development for the Study Area falls with DWR and the State Water Contractors (SWC). Researchers will review the Davis Dolwig Act to verify funding responsibility for the Study Area, and to determine if there are ways to augment base funding. Researchers also will identify additional funding sources, such as grants, appropriate for the maintenance or enhancement of recreational opportunities. For example, DPR's Office of Grants and Local Services is currently awarding several grants that may be appropriate for Study Area management agencies to maintain or enhance recreational opportunities. Butte County and Study Area management agencies, including DPR, may be good candidates for several of the grants currently being offered by DPR. The Riparian and Riverine Habitats, Murray Hayden, Roberti-Z'Berg-Harris, and Dr. Paul Chaffee Zoological programs are examples of the DPR grants currently offered.

Another example of possible funding is the California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program created within the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) by 1991 legislation. The program's mission is to

develop coordinated conservation efforts aimed at protecting and restoring the state's riparian ecosystems.

To accomplish these objectives, while maximizing available public funds, the WCB is authorized to award grants for riparian conservation purposes to nonprofit organizations, local government agencies, state departments and federal agencies.

The Inland Wetlands Conservation Program also represents a potential funding source. The ultimate goal of the program is to protect, maintain and restore wetland habitat to increase waterfowl populations in the Central Valley of California. Eligible projects include wetland habitat acquisitions, as well as wetland habitat enhancements and restorations. Enhancement and restoration projects can be carried out on public or private lands. Eligible grant applicants include nonprofit organizations, special districts and state and local governments.

There may be grants available for developing or enhancing recreational opportunities for urban youth appropriate for specific sections of the Study Area adjacent to the City of Oroville.

Grants may also be available for a variety of other recreational opportunities, such as access enhancement throughout the Study Area. The WCB's Public Access Program is one an example of this type of grant. Public Access Program activities include acquisition and development of lands to provide public access. Typically, a local government sponsor assumes the operation and maintenance (O&M) for the project improvements that may be located on department-owned or other lands, where cooperative agreements will provide for continued protection of the project areas. Project improvements have included fishing piers, boat launching ramps and trails for fishing and hunting access, or for just observing and enjoying plants and wildlife in a natural setting.

Task 3D—Investigate Alternate Fee Structures

In addition to examining grant opportunities, the research team will examine the possibility of alternative fee structures, especially at sites where no fees have been charged. This investigation will involve reviewing literature on the effects of fees on program budgets. Researchers will examine previous studies and literature to identify other locations similar to the Study Area where alternate fee structures have been employed to supplement base budgets.

Task 4—Identify and Evaluate Management Structures

Task 4A—Identify and Evaluate Existing Management Structure

Tasks 1 through 3 are designed to develop an in-depth understanding of recreation management issues and problems faced by those agencies with current management responsibility for the Study Area. In Task 4A researchers will identify reasons for problems and propose solutions, without changing the current management structure. Identify other alternative management structures that exist at other similar recreation facilities (e.g. East Bay Municipal Utility District, Turlock Irrigation District, other state park facilities).

Task 4B—Identify and Evaluate Alternate Management Structures

Task 4B will identify and evaluate several alternate management structures as potential solutions to problems identified in Tasks 1 through 3. For example, the existing management structure identifies DWR as the FERC license holder, but actual management of many O&M tasks is delegated by law or statute to DPR. A management structure with a single agency may better address current and anticipated recreation issues and problems. Another structure may focus on increasing the responsibility level of the FRPRD, Sheriff, or other local management structure. Another structure may evaluate the effect of shifting responsibility to the Joint Powers Authority (JPA). Finally, another management structure may rely heavily on concessionaires to perform particular tasks, such as campground management.

6.0 Results and Products/Deliverables

The following products will be developed for this study:

- Interim Report
- Draft Final Report

The Interim Report will focus on describing the existing management situation, and the Draft Final Report will focus on ways to improve management effectiveness, cost effectiveness, and customer service. Both reports will contain an executive summary; an introduction; objectives; methods; results; and a discussion. The study results will ensure that essential management functions (O&M, debris cleanup, law enforcement) are maintained or enhanced during the license period.

7.0 Coordination and Implementation Strategy

Coordination with Other Resource Areas/Studies

This study will require coordination with SP-R3—Assess the Relationship of Project Operations and Recreation; SP-R4—Assess the Relationship between Fish and Wildlife Management and Recreation; SP-R10—Recreation Facility and Condition Inventory; and SP-R13—Recreation Surveys. Findings from this study may provide information for SP-R18—Recreation Activity and Spending/Economic Impacts.

Issues, Concerns, Comments Tracking, and/or Regulatory Compliance Requirements

The results of the study will address Issue Statement R4—adequacy of operations and maintenance and clean-up activities associated with existing and new recreation areas, and Issue Statement R5—appropriate recreation funding, development, and management structure. The following specific Issues will be addressed: RE 3, 4, 5-10, 12, 13-15, 28-39, 53, 55, 56, 60, 61, 63-83, 85, 96 and 104.

8.0 Study Schedule

Data collection: January through April 2003.

Data analysis and report writing: May through August 2003.

Interim Report due: June 2003.

Draft Final Report due: September 2003.

Attachment A.

Existing Information

1. ORAC reports
2. Kearns and West reports
3. Reports from Supervisor Beeler's office
4. The Economic Renewal Plan for The Greater Oroville Area (AKA LORA Plan by some members of the community)
5. CPS Study
6. Guthrie Study Comments
7. FERC Order dated 9-22-94
8. DWR report on Davis-Dolwig Act recreation responsibilities